

'We are committed to provide a nurturing
stimulating environment
which empowers each child to realise their
potential'
'Your Child, Our Inspiration'



Governing Body Newsletter – Spring Term 2018

Hello, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the Governing Body and give you a summary of who we are, what we do, what happened in the first term, and how to contact us.

What Does the Governing Body Do?

The Governing Body works with the nursery staff team to provide the best possible education for the children who attend Whitecross by:

- Setting the strategic direction for the nursery school, including vision and values, and agreeing on school development plans and policies;
- Monitoring and evaluating the educational performance of the school and delivery of the vision and values of the nursery school;
- Ensuring the school is accountable to the children and parents it serves; to the local community; to those who fund and maintain it and to the staff it employs;
- Ensuring financial health, probity, and value for money.



The full Governing Body meets every half term. There are two committees in place – Resources and Standards – with each committee meeting at least once each term. We also support and attend various events throughout the year such as the Christmas concert, Spring Fayre, and Nursery outings.

Who Are We?

Our Governing Body comprises a number of different types of governors, all with differing backgrounds and skills.

Parent Governors are elected by you, our parents, and we have two parent governors at any one time.

Co-opted Governors are appointed by the governing body on the basis of their skills and experience. We can have five co-opted governors on our board.

Authority Governors are appointed by the Local Authority. We can have one Local Authority Governor.

Staff Governors are elected by our staff members and we can have one staff governor on our governing board.

Our **Clerk to Governors** is Julie Fowler. It is the clerk's role to support and advise our governors in their work.

Who Are We? Continued

As well as monitoring educational performance and progress on the school development plan a number of our governors also work with the Headteacher on specific areas of nursery management and these are listed below:

Performance Management – Claire Devey & Claire Leggett

Special Educational Needs (SEN) – Su Wall

Safeguarding, Safer Recruitment & Looked After Children – Julie Jennens

Health & Safety – Vikki Small

In addition to our Governing Body members, we have two committee members, Ian Ronald and Dan Elder, who bring additional skills to our Resources Committee in the areas of premises management and HR.

An Introduction to Your Whitecross Governors

Claire Devey, Chair of Governors (Parent Governor)

I am a full-time Mum to Alexander who attended Whitecross last year, and Joseph who will hopefully be starting next September. Alexander had a wonderful time at Whitecross and we were wowed by the professional, caring and knowledgeable team at the nursery school. This experience prompted me to apply for the parent governor vacancy last November and I hope to continue to support and contribute to the success of this lovely school in my new role as Chair of Governors.



Joanne Hodgson, Vice Chair of Governors & Resources Committee Chair (Co-opted Governor)

I joined the Whitecross Governing Board in 2015. I have a daughter, Leila, who attended Whitecross and a son, William, hoping to start next September. When the opportunity arose to join the governing body I was keen to volunteer my finance and project management skills, hopefully contributing to the continued success of Whitecross.



Clare Leggett (Co-opted Governor)

I have two children, Katie and Thomas. Katie attended Whitecross before starting school and received fantastic support and extra help when she needed it. Thomas attended Whitecross last year and thoroughly enjoyed it. My husband and I feel that Whitecross provides an excellent grounding to support the transition into primary school. I became a governor in June 2014 as, like other governors, I wanted to give something back.



Vikki Small (Parent Governor)

I became a Parent Governor in 2016 and my specific Governing Body responsibility is Health and Safety. It is a pleasure to work with the committed nursery staff and other governors. Supporting a nurturing environment to the children and contributing to the future success of the nursery school, is the core of what we do. Whitecross made the transition to full time school life for my son, an easier one and my youngest child Isla started here in September.



Julie Jennens, Standards Committee Chair (Co-opted Governor)

My eldest daughter Isla attended Whitecross and my youngest daughter Elodie started here in September. I cannot say enough about how utterly fantastic Isla and Elodie's experiences have been. The staff are so welcoming and make the journey into 'formal' learning a real adventure. I live locally and like other governors, wanted to give something back. I have worked for the Probation Service for over 10 years and will use some of my experience in my role as Safeguarding Governor.



Su Wall (Co-opted Governor)

Hi, I am the new governor for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEN) at Whitecross. I am absolutely delighted to be part of the governance team at Whitecross Nursery School. I have worked in the early years/education sector for over 25 years now with a focus on children aged 0-5yrs. My passion is working with the early years offering high-quality provision for all children to thrive in. I am currently a senior lecturer at the University of Derby on the BA (Hons) Early childhood studies with specialist expertise in SEND, Safeguarding, Play and the great outdoor learning environment. Previous to this role, I have worked in a variety of nursery environments and I have also been a Local Authority Advisor offering support and guidance for nursery settings.



Natalie Elder (Co-opted Governor)

I have two children, my youngest daughter Florence is currently attending Whitecross and is thoroughly enjoying her time there. I have heard such wonderful things about the setting, which prompted me to apply for the recent vacancy of co-opted Governor. I have worked as a teacher for over 10 years in an infant and nursery school and will hopefully be able to offer some practical and valuable experience.



Hilary Smyth (Local Authority Governor)

I have been working as an Ofsted registered childminder for the past 8 years. My background lies in education ranging from running a pre-school at Lawn Primary (many years ago!) through various roles in Derby City Primary schools including Special Educational Needs Teaching Assistant, Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Learning Mentor, and Behaviour Management. My links with Whitecross Nursery go back roughly 25 years - my children attended and were very happy, I completed my nursery nursing qualifications alongside Lindsay Bannister and was mentored by the previous Headteacher. I feel the time is right to use my experience to support Whitecross in continuing to be successful in the wonderful job they do in caring for and educating, children.



Jayne Staves (Staff Governor)

I began my teaching career at an Infants' School in Wirksworth and then took a break to raise my family. I returned to teaching at Whitecross and feel very privileged to be working in a stand-alone Nursery School, where the focus is on how children learn in the early years. I appreciate being part of a small team as it means I can play a part in decisions about the way in which the Nursery continues to move forward.



What We Have Been Working on During the Autumn Term:

- We ended the summer term with a number of vacancies on our governing body, and we were delighted to welcome our new governors Natalie, Su and Hilary to the team this term. We also elected Claire Devey and Joanne Hodgson to the roles of Chair and Vice Chair;
- We have carefully reviewed our terms of reference for the governing board and our committees and elected committee chairs for the year;
- We have agreed on the school development plan for this academic year;
- We have reviewed the educational performance data for last year, which has provided the priorities on this year's school development plan;
- Monitoring of the Whitecross budget takes place termly in the Resources Committee and all is on track for this year;
- We worked hard last year to look at how best to enable our families to benefit from the new 30 funded hours scheme, which started in September 2017, while still delivering our values and meeting the needs of all our families. This led to a number of changes to the way in which the nursery operates, including the launch of a new Breakfast club, and we have been monitoring the impact of these changes on our children and staff;
- Following recent changes to the funding for maintained nursery schools like ours, we have been looking carefully at what lies ahead. Derby has seven such nursery schools and we know they are greatly valued by the communities in which they are based. We want to ensure they can continue to support children and their families long into the future;
- A big emphasis continues to be placed on Whitecross school policies, which staff and governors have been working hard to keep up to date and accurate. Copies of the policies are always available in the office if any parents would like to see them;
- The Nursery School is due to be inspected by Ofsted early this year and the Governing Body's effectiveness will be reviewed at this inspection. A number of governors have attended training to support our preparation for this and we have reviewed our effectiveness and ways of working to ensure we are following the latest governance best practice.



How to Contact the Governors:

If you have any messages or would like to discuss anything with the Governors, please leave a note in the Governor pigeon hole (next to the children's pigeon holes). Alternatively, please speak directly to any Governor when you see them at Nursery (photos are displayed in the reception area).

We are always keen to hear from parents, carers or family members who are interested in supporting the work of our Governing Body, as Governors or Committee members, so please get in touch if this is something of interest to you.

***The next meeting of the Governing Body will take place on
Wednesday 24th January at 6pm.***